Why my Photographs are Bad

CHARLES M. TAYLOR, JR.

45

April, 1948 - Los Angeles

Margo,

I do hope this little book will prove valuable to you as you tour Europe. When you are through with it, perhaps you could pass it on to an Art lover.

Rosemarie

WHY MY PHOTOGRAPHS ARE BAD

BOOKS BY CHARLES M. TAYLOR, JR.

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Why My Photographs Are Bad

BY

CHARLES M. TAYLOR, Jr.

Author of "Odd Bits of Travel with Brush and Camera," "Touring Alaska and The Yellowstone," etc.

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

PHILADELPHIA

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MCMII

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I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME TO
MY FRIEND AND PUBLISHER
GEORGE W. JACOBS

As the language of the face is universal, so 'tis very comprehensive; no laconism can reach it: 'tis the shorthand of the mind, and crowds a great deal in a little room.

—*Jeremy Collier.*

PREFACE

In memory of the many trials and errors of my own experience in photography, I launch this volume upon its career, hoping it may aid the ambitious beginner, and enable him to avoid the most common mistakes incident to the first stages of this interesting study.

In my early days with the camera, I used every possible means of becoming proficient in manipulating the instrument, and read many voluminous writings on the subject; but found no information which speedily brought me face to face with the causes of my most glaring defects, and at the same time suggested methods by which they might be prevented.

In order to increase my stock of knowledge by observation and association with others interested in this line of art, I joined several well-known photographic clubs and societies; but my progress was still so slow and tedious that finally I determined to receive practical instruction from one of the best commercial photographers in the city. This course happily proved most successful; the "danger line" was at last passed. Disappointments over ruined plates became of less frequent occurrence, under and over exposures ceased to be a perplexing problem, unattractive posing now seldom worried me, in short the generally unsatisfactory results of the beginner soon changed to that pleasurable contemplation of work achieved which, I think, is one of the greatest enjoyments of those who "know how."

Hence I strongly advise this latter

course to those who would excel in photography. The permanent advantage thus gained at the outset will save the amateur many trials and discouragements, for it is a grievous mistake to think that this accomplishment is of such minor importance, compared with the fine arts, that it may be used only as an amusement for children.

To the skilled manipulator, the camera offers a scope for imagination and ingenuity in obtaining picturesque effects which vie with that of the artist in oils and water colors.

Therefore one may not hope to master its intricacies in too short a time, and without labor and study. An amount of application and perseverance, almost equal to that bestowed upon the kindred arts is necessary here. In this relation, I cannot refrain from protesting against the aversion to the camera, frequently ex-

pressed by artists of note. This prejudice, however, exists to a less extent than heretofore, since many painters of the present day, either openly or in secret, make use of this once despised instrument as an auxiliary to their work on canvas. In making this statement I do not wish to be misunderstood. The artist uses the camera merely to register on paper an impression, hitherto the office of the memory.

An amusing interview took place not long ago between a prominent marine artist and the author of this work, in which the camera was held as a cup of poison in the fingers of the painter. I had suggested it to him as a means of preserving the appearance of ocean waves. The proposition was received with a scornful refusal, accompanied by some harsh comments in reference to my valued little friend, the camera. Several

months later, the same artist called upon me with the request that I would purchase a camera for him, and give him instruction in its use.

One should not be disheartened if he fails at first to equal the work of the masters in this art—especially in the matter of pictorial effect. Persevere, labor, study nature in connection with the camera, and, as a lasting reward, your dream of success will become a reality, your perplexities will gradually fade into nothingness and the fascinating art of photography will become one of the greatest pleasures of your life.

I do not wish to convey to the reader the impression that this limited work covers *all* the errors of beginners—far from it. It is simply intended to draw the attention of the novice to a method of handling the camera, by which he

will incur fewer disappointments, and obtain more satisfactory results.

C. M. T. Jr.

May, 1902.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

It has not been deemed necessary to include a List of Illustrations in this volume, as the various illustrations contained in Part I, and the errors they represent, are fully described in the text matter accompanying that portion of the book. The illustrations in Part II are what may be considered good specimens of correct photography, showing results that any amateur can obtain by care and study.

PART I

Some Photographic Errors and How to Avoid Them

Author's Note to Part I

The author takes it for granted that the amateur has received his first lesson from the dealer who provided his camera and outfit. This lesson generally relates to the manner of putting the plates in the plate-holder and oral instructions as to the making of a picture. These brief directions can be given in the space of an hour. Dealers also generally have a dark room or closet in their stores for the convenience of customers.—In this interview the manipulation of the shutter for instantaneous and time exposures is likewise explained.

After this your troubles will come, and you will truly think: "How abject;

how august; how complicated, how wonderful is"—the camera!

It has been stated as an indisputable fact that, to be absolutely sure of a picture, glass plates are preferable to the roll films, but my experience would seem to contradict this assertion, for I have carried hundreds of films during my travels, which have extended to many lands and included a variety of climates. These films have been exposed under the most trying circumstances, and the loss by defective films has not exceeded from two to two and a half per cent. There are many advantages in using the Kodak Roll Films, one of the greatest being in the changing of the roll, which can be accomplished in broad daylight, without the use of the dark room. Exposures can also be made in quicker succession by the Kodak Roll Camera, than by those provided with plate-holders.

The chief difficulty here is in estimating by the eye the correct distance in feet, between the object to be photographed and the operator, and setting the pointer at the proper scale. A miscalculation would throw the picture out of focus and produce a blur; practice, however, enables one to overcome this.

To counteract the lack of experience on the part of the beginner, the Eastman Company has manufactured a folding camera, called the "No. 1 Folding Pocket Kodak," which takes a picture measuring 2½x3½ inches—also one called the "No. 1 A Folding Pocket Kodak," giving a negative 2½x4½ inches. These two cameras are of *universal focus*, hence require no adjustment on the part of the operator. From my own experience I would recommend the tourist to include one of these in his outfit, as they are ever ready for instantaneous or time exposures. They are

rarely out of order, and their photographic qualities are most satisfactory.

While on a recent journey, I met an enthusiastic amateur, whose only camera was a "No. 3 Folding Pocket Kodak."

These cameras require proper focus to be made on each subject up to one hundred feet; but regardless of this fact, or of the use of the finder, he shot off his shutter at random—to the right—to the left—before—behind—at any and everything that came his way, and when snapping the shutter he would close his eyes, pointing his camera in the direction of the subject, like an amateur marksman with his rifle. Imagine the results! Then he denounced and condemned the innocent little kodak.

The tourist should have his films, rolls, or glass plates hermetically sealed in tin boxes; and after exposure they should be returned to the sealed tin boxes. This is

a safeguard against the dampness and variable climates of other countries, and also protects them from the attacks of the proverbial and ill-disposed "baggage smasher."

While traveling in the interior of Japan, I lost fully two hundred and fifty plates which had been carefully exposed, by not observing this simple precaution.

I would also advise the traveler to become thoroughly acquainted with his camera and lens before starting on his journey, lest he repeat the disappointing experience of a celebrated explorer, who took, as he supposed, more than six hundred pictures, which should have proved exceedingly valuable as scientific studies and other important data.

Upon developing the plates on his return home, not a trace of the interesting subjects was visible. Some mistake in manipulating the shutter was responsible

for the irreparable misfortune. His plates were all blanks.

Your dealer will always allow you ample time to test a camera, and it will repay you to embrace this opportunity, and not decide too hastily upon your photographic outfit. Above all, do not hesitate to ask for information regarding any point upon which you are in doubt. I once had for a traveling companion on the continent, a man who always maintained that to make inquiries was a sure sign of ignorance. Be that as it may, it is also the sure means of lessening that ignorance. Since we could never agree on the same course in this matter, we were compelled to part company.

A few days ago, a friend of mine, knowing I was compiling a book on photography for the instruction of the beginner, said laughingly, "Why, Mr. Taylor, I never had a camera in my

hands and have toured the world several times. I have the finest collection of foreign pictures [photographs] that any one would desire to possess. What's the use of all the trouble, expense and labor of owning and operating a camera? At the best you never succeed in having more than forty per cent. of your photographic work turn out well?"

How could any one live in this age of progress, love of beauty and refinement with such a narrow mind, especially a traveler? I was anxious to see his collection, so shortly made him a visit and viewed his photographs,—and what did I find? The same old stereotyped, ever-handled, threadbare pictures that every traveler has almost forced upon him. Look at the photographs of this tourist and compare them with those of one's own taking. Is there any comparison as regards interest and happy memories be-

tween the two? The purchased photograph is cold in tone and feeling, without incident or association.

By all means own your own camera; learn how to operate it and have the ready wit to make your tour not only a success to yourself, but also a pleasure to your friends upon your return home.

I

PLACING A PICTURE

I

PLACING A PICTURE

The beginner frequently makes the mistake of placing his camera so close to the person or object to be photographed, that his subject will more than fill the plate, and the result is sometimes a grotesque appearance—the head or a portion of the body of the sitter being cut off, or perhaps the best part of a fine landscape being lost. Eight times out of ten, the operator, upon beholding the consequences of his error, will condemn the camera as a poor one, or his lens as defective.

This fault is easily avoided. Place your camera at such a distance from your subject that the figures will be

correctly proportioned on the plate. Uncap the lens, cover the camera with a black cloth, and proceed to focus sharply, *using a magnifying glass upon the ground glass.*

Should the image reflected upon the glass be too large, move the camera back from the view or sitter, until the desired proportions appear. If, on the contrary, the picture is too small, advance the camera towards the subject. With judgment and practice, you will soon learn to do this instinctively. Never strive to obtain a picture too large for your plate. Should you wish a photograph of greater size, any photographer will, at a small cost, make an enlarged print from your small negative. You are doubtless aware by this time that all images reflected upon the ground glass of the camera, appear inverted.

There are lenses manufactured known

and designated as long and short focus, wide angle, etc. The uses of the above lenses are apparent; should one desire to make a photograph of a landscape with great depth of scenery, the long focus lens should be used; or, should one wish to embody a great amount of detail in the limits of a negative plate—such as large buildings, or the interior of rooms—the wide angle lens should be employed. The latter lens is also very desirable for group work in rooms of limited dimensions, as these lenses show great concentration of subject.

II

THE USE OF A HEAD REST

II

THE USE OF A HEAD REST

It is annoying and expensive when making a portrait, especially if upon a 5x7 or 8x10 negative plate, to find the result as that shown in plate No. 2.

This is caused by the subject's moving while the exposure was being made. To avoid this difficulty, procure a head rest of your dealer; this can be adjusted to suit all the various positions in which you may desire to place your subject, as it can be used for either full figure work or sitting positions.

Should your lens be a quick one, so as to enable you to take instantaneous exposures in the studio, then of course it would be unnecessary to use the head

rest; otherwise, if the time for the exposure of the plate be four to ten seconds, you will be more sure of good results if you use the rest.

I grant that it would be better not to use the rest if the subject could hold perfectly still, as in the latter case the position is more natural and graceful than where a rest is used; but you will find it a very difficult matter to get the sitter to remain absolutely still during the required time for exposure.

III

POSING SINGLE FIGURES AND GROUPS

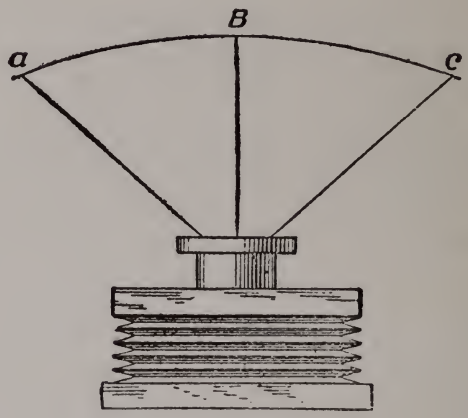
III

POSING SINGLE FIGURES AND GROUPS

THERE are many points to be considered in photographing figures and groups. First notice the arrangement, if you would have an artistic picture. *Avoid stiffness* and *straight lines* in posing your subject. Natural curves give grace and beauty.

When the sitter is placed to your satisfaction, take your camera and focus sharply the image upon the ground glass. *Focus upon the eye of the person*, which will equalize the general effect. In taking a group, *focus upon the central figure.*

In arranging a group, place the figures in a curved line; thus —



The reason for this is apparent. The figures—A—B—C—*are at equal distances from the lens*, and when focus is made on the central figure, B, both A and C are also in proportion.

Avoid placing perpendicular objects, such as lamps, tables, etc., (as in plate No. 3), in close proximity to the person who is to be photographed. These

articles give a stiff character to the picture, and if they are of small size, the whole scene looks illy proportioned.

Be careful not to have your subject too far above or below the level of your lens. In the first case the effect would be to shorten the picture, while in the latter, the images would be lengthened. *The best position is a trifle above the level of the camera.*

Diaphragms or Stops

These diaphragms or stops are to the lens what the key-board is to the piano; to do good work one must study carefully their uses. I have met scores of amateurs, who own and operate cameras, who have never used these stops at all. They may have noticed that these were attached to their lenses, but overlooked their use or considered them unimportant. Every lens, whether of cheap

or expensive manufacture, is provided with what are termed diaphragms or stops, the use of which is to increase or diminish the amount of light entering the camera in order to secure a sharper image upon the ground glass and consequently upon the negative. For instance: if the day is bright and sunny and you wish to take a time exposure, you may with advantage stop your lens down to Nos. 32 or 64 diaphragm; but should the day be dark and cloudy, you can increase the light on your negative by using stop No. 4 or No. 8. Do not forget that the higher the number of the stop or diaphragm, the more time you must allow for the exposure; hence, if you allow an exposure of 1-10 of one second with No. 16 stop, 1-5 of one second must be given with the No. 32 stop, 1-3 of one second with the No. 64 stop, and so on. The more closely you "stop down" the

lens, the sharper will be the details in your picture.

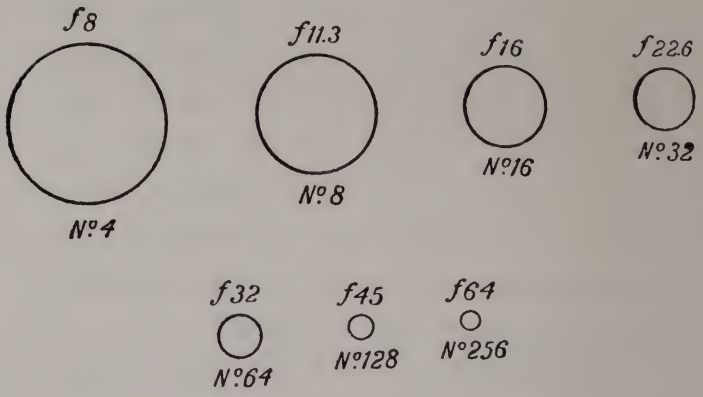
Hundreds of tables have been compiled, dozens of ideas expounded, and many ingenious devices made to regulate the exposure of a negative plate, but all are too complicated. I fear that so much intricate calculation on the part of the bewildered amateur would lead him further from the desired result than a simple rule which can be followed in most instances or which can be added to as his experience may suggest.

For example, a 5x4 Rectilinear or any double lens is usually about a six and a half inch focus, and the largest diaphragm has an opening this size :

Actual size of lens

Accompanying this lens there are *seven stops or diaphragms* in the following order:

ACTUAL SIZES.



Let us presume your lens registers in speed the one hundredth part of a second. I would then use the following table for approximate exposures, at least until your experience may lead you to a closer and more accurate division of time.

WITH A WINTER LIGHT—12 O'CLOCK NOON.

For *instantaneous* exposures always use a No. 4 or No. 8 diaphragm, never smaller.

For *time* exposures, with	No.				16	stop,	expose	$\frac{1}{10}$	of	1	second
"	"	"	"	"	32	"	"	$\frac{1}{5}$	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	64	"	"	$\frac{1}{3}$	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	128	"	"	$\frac{2}{3}$	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	256	"	"	$1\frac{1}{2}$	seconds		

If about 9 A. M. or 3 P. M., double the time of these exposures. On cloudy days or for pictures taken in shadow, multiply the above table by ten.

WITH A SUMMER LIGHT—12 O'CLOCK NOON.

For *instantaneous* exposures always use a No. 8 or No. 16 diaphragm, never larger.

For *time* exposures, with	No.				16	stop,	expose	$\frac{1}{20}$	of	1	second
"	"	"	"	"	32	"	"	$\frac{1}{10}$	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	64	"	"	$\frac{1}{5}$	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	128	"	"	$\frac{1}{3}$	"	"	"
"	"	"	"	"	256	"	"	$\frac{2}{3}$	"	"	"

If about 9 A. M. or 3 P. M., double the time of these exposures. On cloudy days, or for pictures taken in shadow, multiply the above table by ten.

EXPOSURES NECESSARY TO GET MOVING OBJECTS USING NO DIAPHRAGMS.

	Angle towards camera	At right angle to camera
Men and animals walking	$\frac{1}{15}$ of 1 second	$\frac{1}{50}$ of 1 second
Boats and water scenes	$\frac{1}{25}$ " " "	$\frac{1}{60}$ " " "
Children playing	$\frac{1}{50}$ " " "	$\frac{1}{100}$ " " "
Cycling or horse trotting, ordinary gait	$\frac{1}{100}$ " " "	$\frac{1}{200}$ " " "

Athletic sports, running, jumping, etc.	$\frac{1}{150}$	"	"	"	$\frac{1}{400}$	"	"	"
Cycle or horse racing	$\frac{1}{200}$	"	"	"	$\frac{1}{600}$	"	"	"

The above is calculated for

a	4x5	camera at		50 feet from the object				
"	5x7	"	"	60	"	"	"	"
"	$6\frac{1}{2}$x$8\frac{1}{2}$	"	"	75	"	"	"	"
"	8x10	"	"	100	"	"	"	"

If the object is at a greater distance slower exposures can be used; if nearer the camera, quicker exposures should be given.

These tables are calculated upon your using Eastman's Films, Seed's "Gilt Edge Sensitometer 27" or Cramer "Crown" plates.

It will not be many weeks before you have made your own table for both time and instantaneous exposures.

IV

MAKING TIME EXPOSURES WHEN THE WIND IS BLOWING

IV

MAKING TIME EXPOSURES WHEN THE WIND IS BLOWING

You will be greatly disappointed in your picture, whether of figure, building or landscape, if it is a time exposure made when the wind is blowing. In illustration No. 4 you will observe that while the model remains quiet, her hair, as well as the fan and handkerchief, have been moved by the wind; hence the picture, correct in other respects, such as focusing and posing, is worthless as a specimen of good photography.

Should the making of a picture under this disadvantage prove unavoidable, open the stop of your lens to number four or eight, and if the light is powerful enough, give the plate *an instantane-*

ous exposure, and the result will be satisfactory.

I have seen many curious effects of exposures made under similar conditions. One was the picture of a dog, whose master, while coaxing him to be quiet, used such caressing tones and expressions, that Fido's sensitive spirit was raised to the seventh heaven of beatitude; and while his body posed obediently to his master's behest, his tail involuntarily kept up a constant and lively expression of delight. The photograph was a *time exposure*, and the consequence was a portrait of a canine with the unfurled tail of a full fledged peacock.

It is not difficult to suit your class of subjects to the day. Should you desire to make *time* exposures, in which trees and forests are the prominent features, then select the day that is calm and

mild; but, if the scenes are at the sea-shore, and your subject is a yacht at full speed, it adds to the effect to have the wind at its best, and for this picture an *instantaneous* exposure must be made.

V

FORESHORTENING

V

FORESHORTENING

Most beginners quite overlook the importance of perspective in the relative positions of the lens and the subject. To illustrate this point, suppose a post placed twenty feet from the camera, and another but ten feet from it. The post which is ten feet distant will naturally appear much larger on the glass plate of the camera than the one which is twenty feet away. So it is when a subject is seated upon a chair, with hands and feet extended towards the camera. Those members will naturally be reflected as larger in proportion to the rest of the body; and in the finished picture will displease the eye by their exaggerated size, as in plate

No. 5. A. This error is frequently made in photographing animals, when the head is generally made too prominent, and apparently magnified. This is illustrated in plate No. 5 B. It does not appear in such a pronounced form in landscape work, although equally noticeable to the observing eye.

Should the subject be a figure, it is well to place the camera slightly to the side of the sitter, thus equalizing the proportion of distance. This can also be done to advantage in photographing animals, etc.

Study to use the most artistic and picturesque effects. It will take more time, but in the end your labors will be well rewarded.

VI

PICTURES OUT OF FOCUS

VI

PICTURES OUT OF FOCUS

This effect is most commonly the result of carelessness in the use of the focusing scale of feet placed upon closed cameras provided with roll films, as kodaks. These instruments are without the focusing ground glass. As an illustration of this fact, suppose you have purchased a No. 5 Cartridge Kodak with a roll of films. Now the distance between your subject and the lens, if less than a hundred feet away, must be measured. If the object to be photographed is ten feet distant, and the pointer on the focusing scale marks twenty feet, the result will be a negative such as that from which Plate No. 6 is printed. Cameras are generally of uni-

versal focus for distances *greater than a hundred feet.* In using this instrument, calculate as closely as possible, the distance in feet between your subject and the lens; then set the pointer to correspond with this number upon the focusing scale. I have known an amateur to have more than thirty exposures turn out total failures, because she neglected to take advantage of this assistance in focusing. Again I have known several instances of amateurs not using the focusing rack at all; not because they forgot to focus, but because they did not know that it was necessary. I would, however, advise the beginner to use a camera provided with the ground glass, until his eyes become accustomed to judging distances and focusing correctly.

To gain experience in this line, it would be well to measure off distances of six, ten, fifteen, twenty-five, fifty, seventy-

five, and a hundred feet respectively, and impress their relative appearances upon the mind.

This practice will prove very helpful in many photographic emergencies.

If the view to be portrayed is—say a ravine, perhaps a mile or more in depth, you should focus upon some *object in the centre* of the landscape. Close your lens down to a No. 16 or No. 32 stop, and you will secure the *extreme* as well as the *middle distance* in sharp outline.

Again let me strongly recommend to the novice a camera provided with a ground glass plate, for his studies of distances and effects. He should become familiar with this before he branches out into the uncertainty of space, and depends wholly for his information as to the correctness of impressions upon the small view finder at the side of the kodak.

A good and reliable plate for time ex-

posures and landscape work is the "Carbutt B," or any first-class slow plate of slow sensitometer. You will obtain better results with it than with the more highly sensitized plates, as it is not so likely to be ruined by an over exposure of a second or two.

On the other hand, should you wish to make a very short exposure, as in capturing a passing train, a waterfall at the supreme moment, horses or persons in swift motion, the "Cramer Crown" and "Seeds 'Gilt Edge' Sensitometer 27" plates have a world-wide reputation for speed and unvarying excellence.

The majority of professional photographers use the *highly sensitized plates* for all kinds of work, including both time and instantaneous pictures. But great caution is necessary in manipulating these rapid plates, for either under or over exposure will result in a negative of

unsatisfactory quality. A little practice, however, will enable one to secure the desired effect.

When photographing in a new country, it is well to test the *strength of light* and *atmosphere* by making *several exposures* of *different lengths*, until the *correct period* is obtained. This is frequently done by the professionals.

VII

WHEN THE CAP IS INADVERTENTLY HELD BEFORE THE LENS, WHILE MAKING AN EXPOSURE

VII

WHEN THE CAP IS INADVERTENTLY HELD BEFORE THE LENS, WHILE MAKING AN EXPOSURE

With all efforts to be careful, the most zealous student will sometimes make the mistake, while uncapping, of holding the cap within the range of the lens. The result is a dark shadow which completely veils the whole or a portion of his picture, as in illustration No. 7. It is well, when uncapping, to draw the cap quickly down below the lens—thus avoiding the chance of such an accident: but it is better still to have a shutter placed over the lens, which can be done at a reasonable cost, and thus

leave the mind free from the necessity of this precaution.

The same dark shadow is also produced by inadvertently allowing the focusing cloth to dip or fall over the lens after the cap has been removed. Many otherwise fine pictures have been ruined by thoughtlessness like this.

Whilst upon the subject of uncapping the lens, I would mention another thoughtless error that I have sometimes seen made. I have been with amateurs who have focused the picture, replaced the cap upon the lens, drawn the slide from the plate-holder, timed the exposure, returned the slide to the plate-holder, and in their anxiety to obtain a very beautiful result have entirely forgotten to *uncap the lens.* In most of these instances I have noted the error, remained quiet, and informed the operator only when the plate was being de-

veloped. This was done on my part to more thoroughly impress the error on the mind of the operator.

VIII

DOUBLING, OR TAKING TWO PICTURES ON ONE PLATE

VIII

DOUBLING, OR TAKING TWO PICTURES ON ONE PLATE

The amateur who has not experienced this ludicrous effect of his carelessness will, perhaps, not appreciate the present chapter.

Think of having spent several hours tramping over hill and dale, and focusing carefully some charming prospects, only to discover when the plates are developed, that two lovely but distinctly unlike pictures appear, to the utter destruction of each other, upon one negative. Your time and labor, as well as your plates, in such cases, have been wasted. Yet this is not an uncommon oc-

currence, even among professionals. To avoid it, number your plate-holders consecutively, from one upwards, and place them in their respective order when loading your box. When you expose these plates, always begin at the lowest number, and immediately after the exposure is made, jot it down in a handy memorandum book.

Another excellent plan is to have *marked upon the rim of the slide*—(not upon the body of the slide, as a white painted letter would retain enough light to cause an imprint upon the negative)—the word "Exposed." By this means, the holders which, when loaded, have the black edge in view, after they have been exposed will make the fact apparent by the painted word.

Should you use a roll film, do not fail to turn the spool *immediately after taking a picture.* Make this your ab-

solute custom on all occasions, and you will escape the disappointing experiences illustrated by plate No. 8.

IX

HALO OR GHOST

IX

HALO OR GHOST

This appearance is not of frequent occurrence, and is peculiar to the work of amateurs and beginners. It is caused by light, either reflected or direct, falling upon the lens of the camera. Sometimes, after all your precautions, this ghost, as it is called, will steal in and rob you of a perfect picture.

Inspect carefully all conditions before uncapping, and make sure that no light, direct or reflected, falls upon the lens. Sometimes the sun shining upon a window pane will cast a reflection upon the lens and evolve the ghost.

X

THE SHADOW OF THE OPERATOR

X

THE SHADOW OF THE OPERATOR

The appearance of this upon the negative would be impossible if the picture were made at noon or thereabouts, when the sun is overhead; but it must be guarded against when the rays of light are slanting, and objects cast long streaks of shadow. I have seen many valuable studies spoiled by neglecting these principles. The operator generally becomes so engrossed in his work, that he forgets to consider the position of his double. Should his shadow not come within the limits of the picture to be taken, it would not interfere with the success of his photograph: but when it encroaches upon the view he is about to

represent, as in plate No. 10, the picture is spoiled.

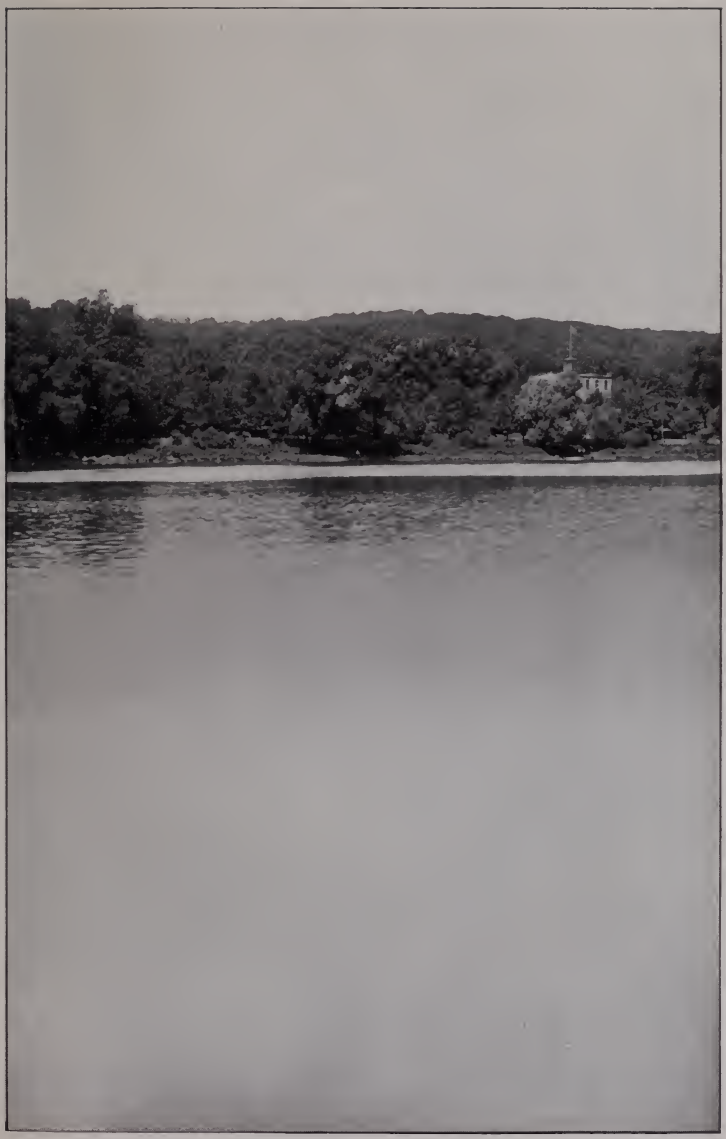
To prevent the presence of this intruder, make your exposures about the time of the sun's meridian, or place your camera at the side of the subject, or increase the distance between the camera and the object to be photographed.

It is to be remembered that, should you make your exposures about the time of the sun's meridian, your results will be more flat and lifeless than if made at another time of the day, either before or after the noon hour.

It is desirable to have your subject well lighted and well modeled in shade; this gives character and effect to the picture. It is very monotonous to the eye to view a landscape flat in color and void of contrast as regards effects in light and shade.

XI

TOO MUCH FOREGROUND



XI

TOO MUCH FOREGROUND

This cannot be called a very serious defect in a picture, but it is inartistic, and objectionable from the fact that too much unattractive material is included in the prospect. It may be said that the superfluous foreground can be cut off—and that is true—but the picture would be reduced, and you would thereby lose an effect you might otherwise attain. Many things are to be considered in proportioning the foreground. Of course the horizon must not divide the picture into two equal parts. It may appear either above or below the middle of your view. This depends wholly upon your subject. But the appearance of too much

foreground in any study, unless it be the ascent of a mountain or roadway, offends the critic's eye—hence it should be avoided.

XII

TOO MUCH SKY

XII

TOO MUCH SKY

The artist would say of such a picture as appears in illustration No. 12, "There is too much canvas 'to let' here." This fault is just as objectionable as a disproportionate amount of foreground. There are, it is true, many pictures in which exquisite cloud effects charm the beholder. The words "too much" cannot be applied to these faithful portrayals by an appreciative and skilful photographer. You will learn to judge, after many trials, of the proportions to be included in a landscape that will give it the most artistic value and effect. Experience and observation will be your teachers.

In looking through the album of an amateur a short time ago, I perceived that, in the majority of the photographs, three-fourths of the picture was occupied by sky, while the subject looked quite insignificant in the remaining space.

Study nature in her every-day dress, as well as in her most enchanting appearances. Know why a certain scene makes an attractive picture, and you will soon become so critical that you will allow no undue proportions to enter your pictures.

XIII

HOLDING THE CAMERA LEVEL WHILE FOCUSING

XIII

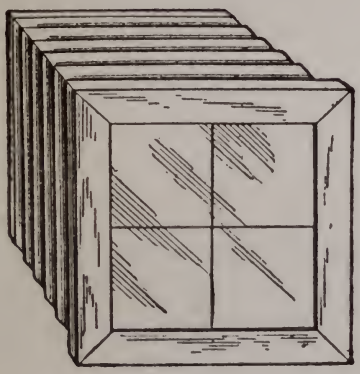
HOLDING THE CAMERA LEVEL WHILE FOCUSING

Pictures like that shown in illustration No. 13 are quite common with the beginner; they are not the result of incorrect focusing, but of *sheer carelessness* in regard to the position of the camera. I have known amateurs to overcome all the early difficulties in photography, and yet to fail repeatedly in their pictures, because they forgot to make sure that the camera was perfectly level while focusing. Many operators use a small camera level glass, which can be placed permanently

on the side of the instrument; but this is not necessary if proper care is given to the position of the camera.

There are, on the other hand, beginners who are so anxious to have a "straight picture," that they lose sight of the character of their subject, and in their persistent but mistaken efforts to have things level, present many odd and untruthful effects, such as losing sight of the true horizon, and making their hills and ascending roads appear on the level. I have in mind an example of this kind of work. It is a photograph of a man standing upon a wharf, while the water in the background runs uphill, when in truth it should be perfectly level. You can imagine the ridiculous effect of such a scene. I would suggest an easy and simple remedy. Take a lead pencil and draw upon the ground glass of the camera

a true *horizontal* and a true *perpendicular* line. Thus—



This will materially aid the eye of the operator in his work, and secure absolutely correct lines in his results.

XIV

PHOTOGRAPHING AGAINST THE SUN.—RETURNING SLIDE TO HOLDER EDGEWISE

XIV

PHOTOGRAPHING AGAINST THE SUN

The beginner frequently makes the mistake of photographing *against the sun* —that is placing the lens in such a position as to receive, either *directly* or *indirectly*, the *rays of the sun* while exposure is being made. This produces a cloudy effect and spoils the picture, as shown in plate No. 14. Protect the lens by having the sun at the back of the camera, or on one side of it while photographing, the latter position being preferable. If it is absolutely necessary to *face the sun*, *shade the lens from above* by your hand or hat. I have seen amateurs recklessly disregard

this rule—and in consequence produce worthless pictures.

Returning Slide to Holder Edgewise

When *replacing the slide* in the plate-holder *after exposure* has been made, be careful to put it in *squarely,—not first inserting the edge of the slide.* The reason for this is obvious. The plate-holder is made with a small spring or door, as it were, which closes quickly, when the slide is withdrawn, and fills the space allowed for it; thus you can readily see that if you insert the edge of the slide first, in returning it to the holder, the door or spring is opened and light admitted, thereby fogging or streaking the plate, as in the illustration.

It would not matter so much were the slide not squarely inserted in the holder, if the camera was completely covered by the focusing cloth; but in forming a

habit for correct working it is well to practice the safe and careful way. You will thus avoid possible error and insure the most desirable results.

XV

OVER-EXPOSED PLATES

XV

OVER-EXPOSED PLATES

The correct time for exposing a negative plate for both indoor and outdoor work has been one of the greatest stumbling blocks to the amateur. Scores of times have I been asked: "How do you determine the proper time of exposure to make a successful picture?"

A number of booklets have been issued by makers of cameras and others, setting forth the exact period required, for the exposures of plates under every imaginable condition of light and shade, for both landscapes and interiors; but these pamphlets frequently prove very confusing. The best instructor is your own judgment combined with experience.

In my early days with the camera, I frequently experimented in exposing my plates and made a multitude of notes on this important subject. Now, however, the correct exposure under the various conditions of light is an instinctive knowledge, and I time my exposures much as the expert "off hand shot" with rifle or pistol fires at the mark without appearing to take aim.

As his grasp of his gun decides the deadly aim of the trapper, so to the experienced photographer, the period of time is not a calculation, but an instantaneous conclusion acquired by long practice. In my experience one of the surest guides on this point has been the ground glass of my camera. Regulate the diaphragm or stop in your lens, and when the subject to be photographed is reflected on the ground glass, note carefully the degree of light and the time of

exposure, and make a memorandum of the same for future reference. Thus you will gradually learn to compare and judge of the respective times of exposure demanded by the different degrees of light.

Suppose, for example, you make your first experiment by placing in the holder a "Seeds 'Gilt Edge' No. 27" Sensitometer plate.

This plate is capable of very quick exposure, your lens is of moderate speed, the subject to be photographed is a landscape, and the day is clear and sunny. Focus carefully *with a magnifying glass*, place the stop No. 16 in the lens, note the light on the ground glass, and remember the degree of intensity. Give the plate an exposure of *one-half second.*

Make another exposure of *one second, under the same conditions, then another one of one and one-half seconds.*

It would also answer the same purpose, but be decidedly more economical to use but one plate for this experiment, drawing out the slide covering the negative plate only a third of the way and giving this portion an exposure of one-half second. Then draw the slide out another third of its distance and expose one-half second, thus giving an exposure of one second to the first portion of the plate uncovered. Finally remove the slide altogether and expose another half second ; you will thus have secured an exposure of one and one-half second for the first third of the plate, an exposure of one second for the second third of the plate, and an exposure of but one-half second for the third of the plate. All this of course must be very carefully done or your experiment will be a failure.

The table given on page 53 may also be of service to the beginner.

You now have three exposures under the same conditions. Develop them carefully, and should the negative or that portion of it which has been given three seconds appear as plate No. 15, you will draw the conclusion that it has been *over-exposed.* The various objects in the picture will be well defined, as are the trees, bridge, etc., in the accompanying plate, and quite sharp when viewed through a magnifying glass, although the whole picture will have a dull and hazy effect.

Of the two evils, over or under exposure, the *former* is to be preferred, for in that case you can restrain the strength of the developer and save the good qualities of the negative, but if under-exposed, there is not much hope for the picture.

I am fully cognizant of the fact that there are many formulas both for the in-

tensification of under-exposed plates and for the reduction of those over exposed, but I claim that it is far better to learn the correct exposure and thus secure more uniformly satisfactory results both in finish and in the harmony of light and shade in the negative.

XVI

UNDER-EXPOSED PLATES

XVI

UNDER-EXPOSED PLATES

As a process of education, it is well to look upon a picture which has the fault opposite to the one just considered. In the under-exposed photograph shown in illustration No. 16 you will observe that the details are not sharply defined as in the one printed from the over-exposed plate.

An under-timed picture has the appearance of fog—it has what is called a "measly look." This effect is more difficult to counteract than that of over-exposure; and even when every means to improve the picture has been used it is not satisfactory.

The amateur should strive to learn the

method of correct exposure, and practice it. Haphazard manipulation may succeed in some lines of work, but it is rarely successful in photography.

XVII

PICTURES IN WHICH PERPENDICULAR OBJECTS LEAN, OR HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF TOPPLING OVER

XVII

PICTURES IN WHICH PERPENDICULAR OBJECTS LEAN, OR HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF TOPPLING OVER

This is one of the most exasperating results that can come to the amateur photographer. Often the picture is correct in every other respect; the focus is good, the exposure is right, and the development is satisfactory. Why then, after all, is the picture so disappointing? Why do the trees, buildings, fences and other perpendicular objects lean as if about to fall to the earth? This is the fault shown in illustration No. 17.

It is caused by wrong perspective, and any lens will show it regardless of the price—the wide angle lens even more

than others. Any photograph of a high building, when taken from the ground, will show this defect in the result, no matter what lens is used, unless the camera has a swing back which enables the photographer to adjust the ground glass to a vertical position. By examining the image in this vertical position it will be noticed that the image is correctly portrayed, and when the plate holder is adjusted in the same vertical position the exposure will produce the picture in correct perspective. This shows the necessity of using a swing back to avoid this fault which cannot otherwise be eliminated with the hand camera that does not have the swing back.

XVIII

INSTANTANEOUS EXPOSURES

XVIII

INSTANTANEOUS EXPOSURES

TRULY instantaneous photography is one of the most difficult branches of the art of picture taking. It requires not only a quick eye, but good, as well as swift judgment, keen perception and a thorough knowledge of the details of photography. To these qualities should be added coolness and deliberation enough to snap the shutter at the proper moment—or rather fractional part of a second in most cases. You should be neither too slow nor too fast, or you will lose the peculiar effect you desire to capture.

An enthusiastic amateur attempted to make an instantaneous photograph of a

locomotive and train of cars, which were tearing along at the rate of a mile a minute. He snapped the shutter, as he supposed, at the moment the train was passing; but the plate, when developed, revealed only a bare track, with no trace of "the living engine and its tail."

In illustration No. 18 A., the yacht had passed the point which would have placed it in the centre of the plate, *before* the shutter was snapped—thus rendering the representation incomplete. But for this slowness on the part of the operator, the picture would have been good in all its details.

Do not stand too close to the scene or object to be photographed. For instance, if you wish to make a picture of a train of cars at full speed, take a position fully a hundred and fifty feet distant, and make your exposure at an oblique angle, say forty-five to ninety degrees,

with the moving train coming towards you. The distance scale of your camera should be set at one hundred feet or the universal focus. Contemplate the approaching train with calmness, and when it appears in full view upon the *centre* of your camera finder, snap the shutter. Hold the camera firmly, and do not hesitate or delay action for even the hundredth part of a second.

To obtain the best results in this class of work, patience and experience are necessary. For objects which move more slowly, such as pedestrians, or horses and carriages going at ordinary speed, etc., see table on page 53.

Should the object taken move faster than the speed of the camera shutter the result on the negative will be as shown in illustration No. 18 B. The speed of the shutter *must exceed* the speed of the subject photographed.

Study the best effects, even in instantaneous work : if it appears that the engineer of the passing train is about to blow his whistle, or make a signal, wait as long as you can for the more artistic picture. If the subject is a carriage in motion, choose the point of view which presents the most attractive background. All these details should be considered and with care can be made to count in the finished work.

Many amateurs seem to desire *only* instantaneous work, because there is more excitement in it; yet in most cases this very excitement is the cause of the failure to make a good picture.

Perseverance and vigilance will finally overcome all difficulties, and he who has patience to continue in this work, will find himself amply rewarded.

Don'ts for the Beginner

Don't—Photograph against the sun.

Don't—Pose a group in the sun, if a shaded spot is accessible.

Don't—Be in a hurry—Take time.

Don't—Become excited—Keep cool.

Don't—Draw a slide from the holder, or return one to it, unless the holder is covered by a focusing cloth.

Don't—Stop your lens down too much on dark and cloudy days.

Don't—Purchase second-hand cameras when new ones can be obtained almost as cheaply.

Don't—Purchase a camera or lens unless the dealer allows you ample opportunity for testing the same.

Don't—Make two exposures on one plate.

Don't—Leave your plate-holder or lens exposed to bright sunlight; it warps the one and injures the other; also fogs the negative.

Don't—Receive instruction from any one who cannot give authentic information.

Don't—Take films or plates on the ocean, or into damp climates, unless protected by tin boxes, hermetically sealed.

Don't—Be discouraged over failures.

Don't—Believe all you hear about photography, but rely on your own judgment and experience.

Don't—Think that the best results are only chance.

Don't—Take a subject unless the pose or view is carefully studied as to the best effect.

Don't—Forget your red lamp when packing your camera outfit for photographic tours.

Don't—Forget to dust glass plates before placing in plate-holder; otherwise the negative is likely to show "dust spots."

Don't—Keep photographic films or plates in a damp place.

Don't—Forget to purchase films or plates of one emulsion when possible.

Don't—Breathe when photographing, if the camera rests against your body, as you might thus move it out of position.

Don't—Think you are perfect in your work even if you have made a number of successful pictures. There is always much to be learned in the art of photography.

Don't—Promise pictures to your friends, unless you intend fulfilling the obligation.

Don't—Expect your camera to accomplish more than you know.

PART II

Some Specimens of Good Photography

Author's Note to Part II

The author's purpose in adding Part II to this volume is to demonstrate to the beginner how a subject, whether landscape or figure, may be selected or posed so as to avoid many of the errors and bad effects shown in Part I; and also to give some examples of correct time and instantaneous photography.

With careful study of the subject to be photographed with figures placed in the most natural and graceful attitudes suggested by artistic taste and judgment, and with all other necessary circumstances taken into consideration, we need not fear for the ultimate success of any earnest amateur.

The few photographs here shown will

suggest what may be expected of lens, shutter, plate, and operator; the operator, however, is by far the most important factor.

It is not claimed that these photographs are perfect in execution or that they reach the highest point of artistic photography; they are simply samples of good work showing results which, with care and practice any amateur may attain.

No use has been made of double printing for cloud values or of various other manipulations of the negative to produce extremes of light and shade. These effects are so extensive in their character that much could be written in relation thereto; but this course has been avoided that the amateur might not become perplexed.

Let your photographs express individuality; and, as far as possible, sentiment.

Keep your own style and originality, for by doing that you will become a leader in photography, and not a mere copyist or follower of others.

I

Made with Voigtlander Lens No. 2.
Diaphragm No. 32.
Plate—Seed's "Gilt Edge" Sensitometer 27.
Size plate—6½x8½ inches.
In studio—moderate light.
Time exposure 12 seconds.

II

Made with Voigtlander Lens **No. 2.**
Diaphragm No. 16.
Plate—"Cramer Crown."
Size plate—6½x8½ inches.
In studio—moderate light.
Time exposure 10 seconds.

III

Made with Voigtlander Lens No. 2.
Diaphragm No. 16.
Plate—" Cramer Crown."
Size plate—6½x8½ inches.
In studio—moderate light.
Time exposure 10 seconds.

IV

Made with Voigtlander Lens No. 2.
Diaphragm No. 32.
Plate—Seed's "Gilt Edge" Sensitometer 27.
Size plate—6½x8½ inches.
In studio—moderate light.
Time exposure 12 seconds.

V

Made with Bausch & Lomb Rapid Rectilinear Lens.
Diaphragm No. 8.
Eastman Film Cartridge.
Size film—5x7 inches.
Camera "No. 5" Eastman Cartridge Kodak.
Day partly cloudy.
Time exposure ½ second.

NOTE.—To produce the indistinct effect shown in this background, use a No. 8 or even No. 4 diaphragm. Focus sharply upon the object or figure.

VI

Made with Voigtlander Lens No. 2.
Diaphragm No. 16.
Plate—"Cramer Crown."
Size plate—6½x8½ inches.
In studio—shaded light.
Time exposure 15 seconds.

VII

Made with Bausch & Lomb Rapid Rectilinear Lens.
Diaphragm No 64.
Eastman Film Cartridge.
Size film—5x7 inches.
Camera "No. 5" Eastman Cartridge Kodak.
Day clear and bright—no wind.
Time exposure 1 second.

NOTE.—To produce the sharp effect shown in this picture —stop down the lens—using stop No. 64 or even smaller diaphragm.

VIII

Made with Bausch & Lomb Rapid Rectilinear Lens.
Diaphragm No. 16.
Eastman Film Cartridge.
Size film—5x7 inches.
Camera "No. 5" Eastman Cartridge Kodak.
Day clear and bright.
Exposure 100th part of one second.

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IX

Made with Bausch & Lomb Rapid Rectilinear Lens.
Diaphragm No. 16.
Eastman Film Cartridge.
Size film—5x7 inches.
Camera "No. 5" Eastman Cartridge Kodak.
Day clear and bright.
Exposure 100th part of one second.

X

Made with Bausch & Lomb Rapid Rectilinear Lens.
Diaphragm No. 16.
Eastman Film Cartridge.
Size film—5x7 inches.
Camera "No. 5" Eastman Cartridge Kodak.
Day clear and bright.
Exposure 100th part of one second.

XI

Made with Eastman's "No. 1 A" Folding Pocket Kodak.
Diaphragm "open stop."
Eastman Film Cartridge.
Size film 2½x4¼ inches.
Day clear.
Exposure 75th part of one second.

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XII

Made with R. & J. Beck Lens 5x4 Rectilinear 7 inch focus lens.
Diaphragm No. 16.
Plate—Seed's "Gilt Edge" Sensitometer 27.
Size plate—4x5 inches.
Light good.
Exposure 200th part of one second.

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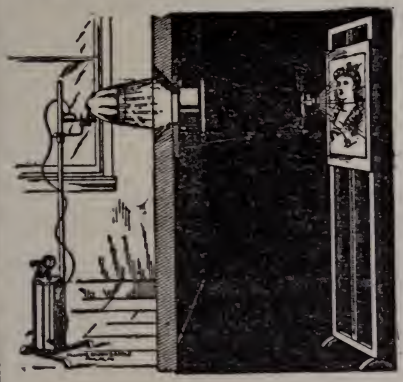

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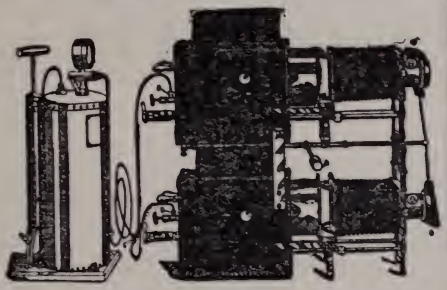

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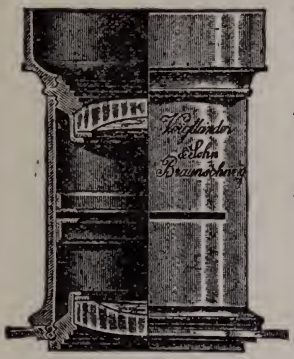

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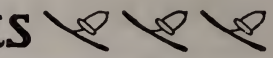

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